



THE AVON PARK BOMBING RANGE
AVON PARK, FLORIDA

Saturday morning
Jan. 9 (?), 1943

Hello Folks,

I'll at least start a letter to ya, - but know I won't get to finish it. -

I finally got assigned to permanent quarters yesterday, so I'm still living out of suitcases, barrack bags, and stuff. - I've just finished unpacking the radio Henry gave me - so I'm enjoying a little music along at this point. Don't know when I'll ever feel settled. - This post is really primitive and rough in lots of ways - and as yet there are no signs of any foot-lockers to be had. so guess a suitcase will have to do ^{for} till something better comes along. You can't leave things out, just laying around. - tho you have to with some stuff like clothes. - The atmosphere is so damp that ~~that~~ even inside everything feels like a wet rag. Your towel, for instance, just never gets a chance to dry out.

But the climate is nice, - I suppose. I just haven't been much in the mood to appreciate it.

Besides there being no organization about the way they run things around here. - We've been fighting an awful cold. - or something! - a continuation of what I had in Washington. - I honestly think it's been a touch of the flu or gripe or what have you. - Several nights I ran a fever & mild chills - have lost all appetite for food, and have "enjoyed" an upset stomach! What I should have done, without a doubt, is to have gone to the "flight surgeon" - but you know me - I'll try to stick it out without using my noodle. - Anyhow - I feel that I'm on the up grade now and if I get to go to town tonight - I'll get some medicine - get a good cleaning out - and feel like my old self again.

Our work here is interesting in its way. - As I said before - the lack of organization gets under your skin. We have spent practically the whole week just pawing around the plane on the ground. - We have to learn the whys & where's of every nut & bolt (or should I say "nuts"?) It is our job, as pilots and commanders of the ship to know every little detail, both about the ship and its equipment, and the jobs & duties of each man aboard. - So you can see - with such a large ship, and an assortment of stuff on it. - that alone is a real job. -

I was scheduled to fly last night - but even tho I used up the whole evening. I didn't even get off the ground. - So guess I'll go up today now. at least that's the schedule. - It takes quite some



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time to check out on the B-26 after you get around to actually get at the controls.

Sunday noon

Well, - I finally got off the ground again yesterday afternoon! - The first time in just about a month to the day, I think. It seemed real nice for a change - but ye gods, - what a big plane! Eight of us went up as a crew for it, - and she went on up as if no one were in it. - of course with no bombs or anything it was very lightly loaded - so we weren't really worrying about it. - Three pilots went along with the senior pilot, and while he stayed in the pilot's seat, we all took turns at the controls in the copilot's seat. - Gee - just that little bit makes you realize how little you do know about the plane. 'Course, - that's been the case all along, each time we'd get to a heavier plane, but they've made so much fuss over this one - we are more conscious of it. - All in all - it will be a very nice plane to fly - she handles swell. We saw the Atlantic Ocean yesterday, too. - the

first time for me in an awful long time, and the first time ever from the air! - Everything was so nice & blue - and there's just as much water out there as it looks to be from the beach! I had to laugh coming back. - It must be about 50 miles - from the shore line to Avar. - and ten minutes after we left the ocean behind, we were lowering down to the traffic pattern of our field! - It just didn't seem possible that we could be covering the ground so fast! - Now I can understand why they call our flying area - the State of Florida! - Guess I'd have to change my name over to "Mercury". - John Freeman has referred to the ships as rockets - so already he has become known as "Buck" - (After Buck Rogers)

Sorry it took you all so long to get my letter. - I don't know why it should have taken 3 days, 'cause I usually get yours in 2. - Maybe our "outgoing" system isn't so hot?

Glad too you got a new battery out of Western Auto. - Now maybe it will last you through the winter without any more "alley episodes". But from what I gather on the radio - you're just going to jack automobiles up and forget them till after the war. - Sometimes I get so darn mad when I think of all the misery a few people with a lust for power has cause the rest of us in the world. - But today is Sunday and I must have a Christian spirit, they tell me. - Oh, well!



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I don't know whether I told you or not. - I had a whole slew of cards awaiting for me when I got back. also several packages - one of candy, from Mrs. Manger, and another with a tobacco pouch from Mr. Hirschman. - It seems to me there was another, too, - but I can't recall it at present.

Sister, if you can get the tires recapped - you'd better do it - as for the wheels being out of line - I think you'll find they are out of balance, instead. - After you get the tires fixed, - you can get the wheels balanced - but the point is - the wheels must be balanced with the tire on it. - After the balance is done - the tire must always be placed on the wheel - exactly the same way, or you have a different balance. - That probably accounts for my never having it done - too much bother - but then rubber wasn't scarce then, - savvy?

Did I tell you some one caught a baby alligator behind our barrack last week? - a little one about ~~eight~~ eighteen inches long. - I've had our eyes peeled in case Mamma or Pappa come looking for junior - but no signs yet. - Maybe in "alligatordom" when one reaches 18 inches - you are on your own!

Also we watch puppies play with these turtles
they occasionally route out. - the one the other
day must have been ^{most} a foot & half in dia.
across his shell! - I forgot to tell that our
barracks are right along a big lake. - about 30 ft
from the water itself - but as you can gather
from the above - it's pretty primitive!

Well. - am writ out so will knock off. - we are
supposed to be flying today, but I wasn't scheduled
so didn't fool around long. - My cold or flu is no
better and if after today with my "castoria" I'm ~~no~~
better - off to the doc I go - but here's hoping! -
It's not really that bad.

Write when you can.

Love,
Frank.

P.S. - Last night we walked all over Avon Park. - Both
squares of it!